

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 01010

LIMDIS

USDOC FOR BEWT, DAS REICH

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEWT, EGEN, UR, US
SUBJECT: BUSINESS FACILITATION MEETINGS

1. WE HAVE FOR SOME TIME BEEN FACED WITH A SITUATION
HERE WHERE SOVIET SIDE TRIES TO HOLD DOWN LEVEL AND
FREQUENCY OF BUSINESS FACILITATION TALKS IN MOSCOW WHICH WE SEEK
PURSUANT TO AGREEMENT AT JUNE, 1977, SESSION OF JOINT
COMMERCIAL COMMISSION. SO FAR WE HAVE HAD ONLY ONE
SESSION WITH DEPUTY MINISTER MANZHULO, AND ALTHOUGH
HE PROMISED AT THAT TIME THAT SUBSEQUENT MEETING WOULD
BE WITHOUT TIME LIMIT, NO SUCH MEETING HAS EVER BEEN
POSSIBLE. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN COUNTRIES
DIVISION MEL'NIKOV HAS BEEN PRINCIPAL SOVIET AGENT IN
CARRYING OUT THIS POLICY. HE HAS FREQUENTLY ARGUED
THAT AGREEMENT TO MEET "REGULARLY" BY NO MEANS IMPLIES
EVEN A MONTHLY MEETING BUT ONLY THAT SUCH MEETINGS COULD
BE HELD WHEN THERE WAS A "REASON." WE HAVE MADE IT
CLEAR THAT VERY NATURE OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION
IMPLIES THIS LAST POINT AND HARDLY NEEDED ANY MENTION
AT JCC SESSION IF THIS WERE ALL THAT WAS INTENDED.
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(OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE ADEQUATE "REASONS" FOR MONTHLY
MEETINGS -- NOT TO MENTION BIMONTHLY -- BUT WE ARE
RELUCTANT TO BE OBLIGED EACH TIME TO JUSTIFY OUR
REQUEST FOR A MEETING.) SOVIETS HAVE ALSO CONSISTENTLY
SOUGHT TO HAVE MEETINGS AT LEVEL LOWER THAN MANZHULO,
WHICH WE REGARD AS MINIMUM ESSENTIAL TO HAVE IMPACT ON
MFT AND OTHER SOVIET AGENCIES WHOSE ACTIVITIES IMPINGE

ON BUSINESS MATTERS.

2. AT MEL'NIKOV'S PERSISTENT REQUESTS WE PROVIDE HIM EARLY THIS MONTH WITH LIST OF TOPICS WE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS IN JANUARY MEETING WITH MANZHULO. IN ORDER TO CONFIRM THIS E/C COUNSELOR WROTE A LETTER TO MANZHULO AND FOLLOWED IT UP IN TWO PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS DURING VISITS OF CODELS SMITH AND STEVENSON, BUT MANZHULO FOR SOME REASON CLAIMED NOT HAVE RECEIVED LETTER.

3. ON JANUARY 20, MEL'NIKOV CALLED COUNSELOR TO SAY MANZHULO HAD RECEIVED LETTER AND FELT THAT SUGGESTED AGENDA COULD BE DISCUSSED AT OFFICE LEVEL (PRESUMABLY BY ZINOV'YEV OR MEL'NIKOV)N WITH MANZHULO AVAILABLE AT SOME UNSPECIFIED POINT TO DISCUSS WHATEVER PROBLEMS COULD NOT BE RESOLVED AT LOWER LEVEL. COUNSELOR NOTED THAT DAS REICH WAS CONDUCTING THESE TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND THAT MANZHULO APPEARED TO BE APPROPRIATE INTERLOCUTOR FOR US IN MOSCOW. MEL'NIKOV DID NOT BUDGE. COUNSELOR THEN SAID HE WOULD REPORT THIS TO AUTHORITIES IN WASHINGTON.

4. THIS SITUATION IS OBVIOUSLY PART OF CONSISTENT SOVIET PATTERN OF TRYING TO HOLD DOWN LEVEL OF EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS, WHILE SOVIET EMBASSY AND TRADE REPRESENTATION PERSONNEL SEEK HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS
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IN USG. WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ACQUIESCE IN SOVIET STRATEGY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN IF THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON THESE CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND EVEN IF THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR COMMERCIAL OFFICE HERE HAD NOT BEEN SEVERELY HAMPERED BY THE UNJUSTIFIABLE EXPULSION OF FSO KURSCH. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WE FEEL WE SHOULD INSIST ON THE SOVIET SIDE STANDING BY COMMITMENT TO HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS WITH US AT EQUAL LEVEL IN BOTH CAPITALS. WE ALSO INTEND TO USE OCCASION OF NEXT SESSION WITH MANZHULO, IF WE GET ONE, TO MENTION OUR DISPLEASURE ABOUT SOVIET EXPULSION OF FSO KURSCH, SO THAT THEY GET THE MESSAGE CLEARLY THAT THEY CANNOT INTERFERE WITH IMPUNITY WITH OUR COMMERCIAL PROGRAM IN THE SOVIET UNION.

5. WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING IN WASHINGTON, IT NOW APPEARS THAT WE WILL AGAIN BE UNABLE TO HAVE A NORMAL ONE IN MOSCOW. WE BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT FEBRUARY MEETING IN WASHINGTON SHOULD NOT BE HELD OR THAT IT SHOULD BE HELD AT A CONSPICUOUSLY LOWER LEVEL, WITH THE SOVIETS SPECIFICALLY INFORMED AS TO REASON WHY THIS SHOULD BE SO. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT UNDER THESE

CIRCUMSTANCES WE SHOULD REVIEW WITH PARTICULAR CARE ALL
SOVIET REQUESTS FOR FACILITATION IN THE UNITED STATES
WITH A VIEW TO INSURING THAT THEY ARE NO MORE FAVORABLE
THAN THAT WHICH WE CAN OBTAIN FOR THE AMERICAN BUSINESS
COMMUNITY HERE.

6. WE ALSO REQUEST DEPARTMENT AND USDOC'S COMMENT AND/OR
GUIDANCE ON ISSUE DESCRIBED IN THIS MESSAGE.

MATLOCK

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